

Underwood Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122746
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327789
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	182
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Andrew Fell
Headteacher	Mr Gareth Letton
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Road Underwood Nottingham NG16 5GN
Telephone number	01773 782868

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Although the number of pupils has been growing steadily over recent years, the school is still smaller than average. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has gained the Healthy School Gold, Quality in Study Support and Activemark accreditations. The school makes provision for Reception aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's skills on entry into school are broadly typical, but there is a significant number whose language and numeracy skills are not as well developed as those of most children of their age. There is an 'after school care club' which operates within the school buildings, but is not managed by the school's governing body.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which cares for the pupils well. Pupils say that they are proud of the school, enjoy coming, and feel safe and secure. Pupils show a good level of respect and sensitivity towards the feelings of adults and other pupils. They work and play together well. Pupils are polite, courteous and well-behaved. Parents regard the school highly and praise its warm and friendly 'family' ethos. Purposeful leadership, good teaching and dedicated staff enable pupils to achieve well.

In recent years, instability within the school caused by numerous staff changes contributed significantly to a decline in standards and achievement, especially in Key Stage 2. The staffing is now stable and the pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well in all key stages. By the time pupils leave Year 2, standards are above average overall and exceptionally high in writing. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is rising and in some classes pupils make outstanding progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are lower in English than in mathematics and science because the more able pupils do not achieve well enough in both reading and writing.

Although the quality of teaching varies between classes, teaching is good overall and sometimes pupils learn exceptionally well. Most teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs. However, in some lessons, work is too easy for many of the pupils and the small steps which help ensure effective learning are not planned carefully enough. Consequently, pupils' work sometimes lacks challenge, especially for the more able pupils in English. The school is beginning to develop a system for pupils' target setting, but it is not yet sufficiently developed to have an impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are confident and have a good level of self-esteem. They know how to keep safe and lead healthy lifestyles because of the emphasis placed in the curriculum on all aspects of personal development. Sport is strong throughout the school and pupils say that the many sports activities enable them to become fit and healthy. Many pupils appreciate the healthy meals provided by the school. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in school and are proud of their work raising money for local and national charities, especially through their strong links with the church. Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in activities involving the local community. For example, the school's musicians entertain the residents of the local care home. These positive aspects, together with pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy, prepare pupils well for their future learning.

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of activities which stimulate learning both inside and outside of the classroom, including residential visits to the Peak District, Wales and France. Many clubs before, during and after school also serve to enrich many pupils' experiences. However, the school is aware that the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to increase pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom and global communities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's strong commitment to improving the life-chances of all pupils is seen through the rising standards and increased pupils' achievement. The school's rigorous self-evaluation processes have enabled senior leaders to identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Leaders at all levels have contributed to improvements in many areas. However, the leadership skills of some subject

leaders are not yet developed well enough, especially in using the information gained through the monitoring programme to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Consequently, their impact on school improvement is not as great as it could be.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well. By the time they enter into Year 1, most have achieved the level of skills normally expected for children of their age and many slightly above. Although there has been a slight fall in children's achievement in recent years, improved teaching and increased teaching assistant support have ensured that this has been overcome.

Children are well-behaved and cooperative. They are keen to learn and are often excited when lessons are about to begin. Children enjoy the lively and imaginative lessons with many active 'hands on' experiences. The teaching assistant supports individuals and groups well. There is a good balance between activities directed by an adult and those children can choose for themselves. However, opportunities are not always taken to reinforce children's learning through some of the independent activities. The outdoor learning areas are currently only satisfactory, but the school has detailed plans to improve these in the near future. Children's welfare is managed and nurtured well. For example, children are encouraged to share things, act sensibly and help each other. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well by the teacher and headteacher working closely together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of the more able pupils in English and provide greater consistency in quality of teaching by ensuring that work is well-matched to pupils' abilities and the small steps which help ensure effective learning are planned carefully.
- Develop the leadership and management skills of all subject leaders and ensure that they use the monitoring information to hold teachers to account for pupils' achievements.
- Ensure that pupils are provided with regular opportunities to increase their understanding of the diversity of cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom and global communities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Building on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1. Despite a slight decline in standards in recent years, mainly due to the lower level of children's skills on entry into school, standards at the end of Year 2 remain above average overall and are exceptionally high in writing.

In recent years, following a period of instability due to staff changes, progress in Key Stage 2 declined. The 2007 end of Key Stage 2 tests showed that pupils' progress was considerably lower than most other schools. The unvalidated 2008 test information shows that progress had improved. Currently, although there is variation between classes, the progress of most pupils in Key Stage 2 is good in all subjects, and is occasionally outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average, but too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning and are often keen and eager to do well. Bullying is minimal and racial incidents extremely rare. Although pupils have some opportunities to learn about people and traditions in other countries, their awareness of the variety of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world is only satisfactory. All pupils have opportunities to take responsibility around the school by accepting 'monitor' jobs in the classroom or around the premises. They understand that they may be faced with many dangers in their lives, such as through the use of the internet, on the roads and by drugs misuse. Pupils develop maturely into sensible young people who look forward to their future school lives with justifiable confidence. Attendance is good and the school is constantly looking for ways to improve it.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and show a good range of effective class management skills. Lessons are calm and orderly and this promotes a positive climate for learning. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils are evident throughout the school. Nearly all pupils respond to this well and work hard. Although the majority of teaching and learning is good, in some classes it is only satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers match work carefully to pupils' different abilities and carefully plan the small steps which help ensure good learning. However, this is not always achieved and some pupils, especially the more able in English, are not challenged well enough. Most teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially those who find learning difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they enjoy the range of learning experiences, particularly in physical education and the variety of sporting activities on offer. English and mathematics form the core of what is taught and, in many classes, the skills learned in these lessons are reinforced well through other subjects. The curriculum helps pupils to develop their social skills through opportunities to work in teams, solve problems and take responsibility. For example, Year 4 pupils had to work hard as a team to produce and present a Chinese Dragon dance with pupils' own music. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for well through a range of alternative or extra activities within lessons or in separate groups. The most able pupils are not always given extra, harder work to extend their learning sufficiently, especially in English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are very committed to pupils' welfare and know the pupils well. As one parent reported, 'Staff always go the extra mile to help'. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding procedures were in place and health and safety systems were followed diligently. Staff have a clear idea of how well pupils are progressing in their academic work, but do not always keep pupils informed of this. Teachers' marking often has many useful comments to help pupils improve.

However, this is inconsistent and, in some classes, pupils say that the teachers' marking does not help them learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's thoughtful and perceptive leadership is a major factor in rising standards and achievement. Teamwork of the staff is also a strength. Teachers and teaching assistants work and support each other well. There is a strong sense of common purpose based upon improving the quality of learning in all classes. The headteacher and subject leaders effectively track pupils' progress and monitor the quality of teaching. However, not all leaders possess the skills needed to improve standards and achievement, especially through holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching or the progress of the pupils. Governors are committed and wholeheartedly support the school. Through the detailed and comprehensive information provided for them by the headteacher, they are increasingly holding the school to account for the achievements of the pupils. Community cohesion is only satisfactory because there is not sufficient emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of the variety of cultures in the United Kingdom and global communities. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the recent rise in pupils' achievement shows that the school has good capacity to improve even further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Underwood C of E Primary School, Underwood NG16 5GN

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such an enjoyable experience. It was a delight to talk to you and to see how happy you are. We learned a lot about your school from you. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books and talking to you. We could see that you try hard to do your best and were very impressed with your behaviour and attitudes. You told us that you enjoy keeping healthy through being very active and eating plenty of fruit and vegetables. Well done!

It was interesting to talk to your teachers and other adults who help you. They are kind and helpful and want you all to do your best. It was good to see how well the adults and children get on together.

You go to a good school and most of you achieve well. However, we think that your progress in some lessons could be even better, especially those of you who are already doing well in English. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that the work is carefully matched to your abilities and the teachers plan carefully the next small steps that will help you learn.

All the teachers work hard for you and some take on additional responsibilities in the school. We have asked the headteacher to ensure that these teachers become even better at helping you by looking carefully at your progress and talking to other teachers about how you could improve even more.

We also feel that you should know more about the different groups of people who live in this country and throughout the world. The headteacher has promised that he will do this.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

We shall take away many good memories about your school and have very much enjoyed the time we have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours faithfully

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector